Varsities launch drives to help pay student debt

PREGA GOVENDER

MAX Price, vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, is coughing up R150 000 from his own pocket to help pay student debt.

And, in an unprecedented move, the student representative councils of UCT and Stellenbosch are calling on alumni to donate to fundraising drives.

This comes as the University of the Witwatersrand SRC launches #Access, a drive to raise R10-million owed by 1 284 students.

Wits deputy vice-chancellor Professor Tawana Kupe said Gauteng MEC for finance Barbara Creecy and Johannesburg mayor Parks Tau were looking into how they could help those students whose debt fell in the R5 001-R20 000 bracket.

The fundraising initiatives are primarily aimed at helping students in the “missing middle” who do not qualify for state funding.

Fasiha Hassan, secretary-general of the Wits SRC, said: “We have set a target of R10-million but no amount will ever be enough.”

Price said he was making the personal donation because he wanted to “lead the way” in the students’ fundraising campaign.

Rorisang Moseli, president of the SRC at UCT, said a team of 15 students would soon start calling alumni to ask them to make donations.

Staff, corporates and the public would also be called on to assist in raising money.

Axolile Qina, president of the SRC at Stellenbosch University, said they had raised R130 000 since January 21.

In its appeal to alumni, the Stellenbosch SRC said: “We trust that Stellenbosch University made a big difference in your life. Help us to create that opportunity for other Maties through your generous donation.”